

WIC Advisory Council Quarterly Meeting

March 25, 2014

11:00 am – 1:00 pm

MINUTES

WIC Advisory Council Members Present:

Kathy Stevens
Myron Bateman
Ralph Clegg
Gina Cornia
Alicia Bradford
Roxie Neilson
Dave Davis
Colleen Jenson

State Staff Members Present:

Dr. Marc Babitz
Chris Furner
Angie Sorrells
Linda Schiele
Karen Smith
Rick Wardle
Phyllis Crowley
Dana Gauthier

I. Welcome and Introductions

Myron Bateman

The participants went around the table and introduced themselves one by one.

II. WIC Budget/Funding and Financial Updates

Chris Furner & Dana Gauthier

- A. Over the course of the past two years, WIC has experienced a 15% drop in participation, and other states have experienced a similar decrease in participation as well. We are not anticipating caseload management or any surprises this year due to having plenty of food funding available to us.

III. State Plan

Rick Wardle

- A. Our state plan for fiscal year 2014 (the one that we are currently operating under) is still under final review from USDA. We anticipate that we will be getting it back soon. We are making edits to the fiscal year 2015 now. We are waiting for the required changes from the USDA that will come in a checklist form. We hope to post the public comment period on May 1 on our public website. We will be sending out a memo to let people know when it is posted. At that time, we will review the comments and make any edits we need to.
- B. We have received our new income guidelines that go into effect July 1. They have gone up a little bit to be in line with 185% of the Federal Poverty Level. We will be sending out the guidelines to the locals in June so they can be implemented July 1.
- C. We are working with an agency called "Private-Ops" who are helping us to find vendor fraud, but they are also helping us find WIC participants who are potentially selling formula and vouchers. The investigators are finding multiple ads per week on websites and garage sales that sell and trade various things. When Private-Ops sends us a potential violation we find out how much of the product was offered, how much they sold it for,

etc. When we do find fraud, it is turned over to the clinic to resolve the problem. Then there will be a sanction recorded that will require the participant to repay the amount of food that they sold. If they do not make their payments, they face suspension from the program.

IV. Mountain Plains User Group Updates

Chris Furner

- A. The Mountain Plains Consortium is now the Mountain Plains User Group. MPUG will be overseeing enhancements and changes to our VISION computer system. The contract has been written and will be executed by the end of April 2014. Everyone in the group will have a voice but new states will not vote until they have been using the system for one full year. All other decisions will be ratified by a vote. We have been given a grant (\$750.00) to form a contract with a project management company to do the administrative work. The RFP for this is out and we expect the work to begin sometime during early summer.

V. Planning for Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) in Utah

- A. In order to proceed with or transition into EBT we need to provide the FNS/USDA with a Planning Advanced Planning Document. This document will include scope, schedule, cost, communication management, change management, resource management, quality management, risk management and procurement.
 - a) Our system is now EBT capable. Wyoming is already using our system to run EBT offline. The states will have the option to operate offline or online (the way the data is processed). Offline EBT involves a daily batch file that is sent to the bank. Online does not require one large transaction the transactions are routed in real-time.
 - b) The biggest factor in choosing to go offline or online concerns the vendors. Some of the vendors have their own system for dealing with point of sale purchases. Some might be on an entirely different system. Some vendors may need to buy new software to effect this change. Dave Davis wants to make sure that WIC and the vendors march forward together.
 - c) Angie Sorrells explained that we will be facilitating a new online EBT module for multiple MP User Group member states. CIBER is on contract with that state to do the online EBT.
 - d) We currently have 59 change ideas that we will be prioritizing and presenting to CIBER. Some of these changes are federally mandated and based on our new food rule.

VI. Nutrition Updates

Phyllis Crowley

- A. The 200-page Final food rule has been passed (March 3, 2014). Here are some of the highlights:
 - 1) There is an increase in fruit and vegetables for children. Their cash-value-voucher used to be a value of \$6.00 worth of produce; it has now been increased to \$8.00.
 - 2) The WIC Program will be allowing participants to pay for produce that exceeds the cash-value-voucher. This is called a “split tender” transaction. We are not allowed to start doing this until October 1, 2014 or April 1, 2015, at the latest.

- 3) We will be able to issue a quart of yogurt for a quart of milk beginning April 2015
 - 4) In the past, we could issue 2% Milk for children and women, but now we must issue 1% or non-fat. We will need a doctor's order to issue Whole Milk in Food Package III. We can also issue soy-based beverage to children without a doctor's prescription.
 - 5) For our participants, 9 through 11 months of age, the endorsers can choose from fresh fruits and vegetables (CVV) and jarred infant food or only jarred infant food.
 - 6) We are still working with the USDA to allow the correct sizes of whole-wheat pasta (16 oz.) and Jack Mackerel fish (5 oz.).
 - 7) There is a large adjustment to cheese – children and women will now only be allowed 1 lb. and fully breastfeeding women may get 2 lbs.
- B. Abbott has reduced the energy or calories per oz. from 20 kcals/fl.oz. to 19 kcals/fl.oz, for Similac Sensitive, Spit Up and Total Comfort. We receive rebates on contracted formulas. However, with this change in calories they are no longer in line with the USDA requirement of 20 kcals/fl. oz. Therefore, the FAFAF will be required for these three formulas. The justification for this reduction in calories is related to the fact that the formula fed babies are overweight when compared with breastfed babies.
- C. The state WIC staff are conducting management evaluations of the local agency; they are about half done. They are seeing stellar work in food package tailoring. Reviews are excellent with minimum findings in the nutrition and breastfeeding areas.

VII. Vendor Management Updates

Linda Schiele

- A. We have become aware that going into the future we need to make some changes to vendor management. They are:
- 1) We have found that we need to change how we do the compliance buys; Private Ops will be doing it now.
 - 2) Linda Schiele will do “education buys” (buy WIC products and go through the line). If there are errors or problems with the way WIC vouchers are handled, Linda will go back and give the cashier re-training if needed.
 - 3) Another area that needs attention are the Management Evaluations. We need to be looking at the (50% WIC) vendors every six months.
 - 4) In addition, we need to change how we determine the number of vendors that we should have. We need to be using a ratio of how many vendors are in each zip code.
 - 5) Linda has recently been looking at a new online vendor management pricing system. The stores can enter there pricing information online. The USDA did a survey and found that there is a high degree of compliance from the WIC vendors.
 - 6) The USDA would like to see us use more cash-value-vouchers for fruits and vegetables.

- 7) The size of peanut butter has changed from 18 oz. to 16 oz. Because there are still 18 oz. jars on the shelves our vouchers have been changed to say from "16-18 oz.).
- 8) Another recent change makes more room for the signature on the vouchers. They made the block larger and moved the line up so participants would have more room. The participants are happy with this change.
- 9) The bread that is WIC approved is the 16 oz. loaf, but the 20 oz. bread is less expensive. We can see that WIC is being overcharged. The price of medium and large eggs is almost the same, so we may start approving the large eggs. Alternatively, consider approving medium **and** large.

VIII. Questions and Wrap-up

- A. Chris Furner expressed his gratitude to all of the devoted WIC Advisory Council Members. WIC Advisory was created to oversee the \$450, 000 emergency funds. The money has been held in that emergency fund for over 20 years. The USDA recently took the money back because the State Legislature was going to spend it on general purchases this year.
- B. Chris would like to propose that we meet bi-annually in March and September. Discussion ensued over modifying the by-laws to reflect such. Chris Furner will edit the by-laws and will share them with the Council to discuss and eventually approve during a future meeting.

XI. Next Meeting:

- A. The participants of this meeting agreed upon the date of September 16, 2014 for our next meeting.

XII. Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 pm.